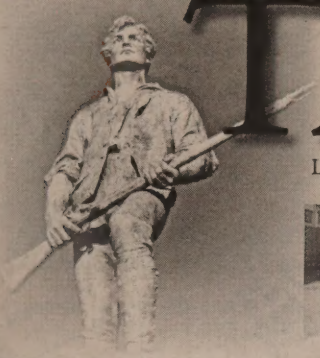
Library Use Only



The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Offbeat Athlete: Juggler
Learn how an ordinary LHS student became a star juggler with a little natural talent and a lot of dedication and practice.
[turn to page 8]

Spring Musical: 'Drood'
Go behind the scenes of with LHS drama department's spring production of The Mystery of Edwin Drood.
[turn to page 4]

Volume LII Issue IV— April 2011

2012 budget proposes cuts and launches new positions

■ Jonah Bader
News Editor

Town Meeting members voted on March 28 to approve the school budget for fiscal year 2012.

The vote followed the School Committee's unanimous approval on Feb. 15.

Every year, Lexington Public Schools Superintendent Paul B. Ash, faces the task of balancing the school budget. The budget for fiscal year 2012 was especially difficult to create, and Ash's budget proposal provoked criticism and debate.

The FY12 budget will impact the students and staff throughout all the Lexington Public Schools. To see how it will affect LHS specifically, visit the Lexington Public Schools website.

Ash pointed out that the cuts were not nearly as drastic as they might have been, largely because money remained from years past and because extra money was appropriated by the selectmen to help stave off deeper cuts. Ash also emphasized that there will be an overall increase in LPS staff in FY12.

Noah Coolidge, a junior at LHS and the student representative on the School Committee, praised the superintendent.

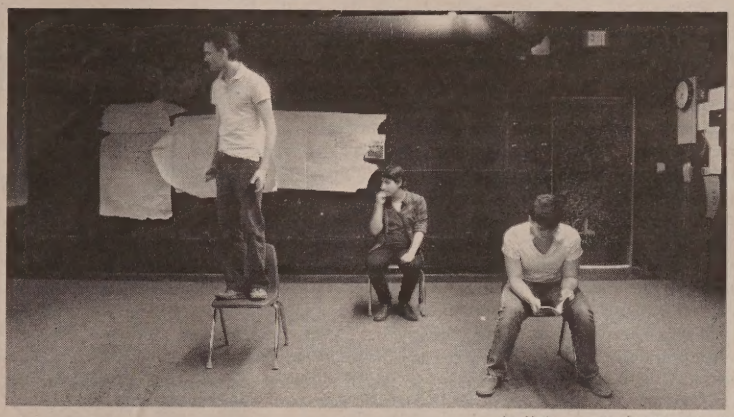
"I think Ash did a very good job of keeping things that are used and looking for efficiencies where they could be found," Coolidge said. "Difficult decisions were made, but we are in a better position than other towns."

Ash's plan, however, also met opposition.

Phyllis Neufeld, president
[FY12 BUDGET page 6]

'Columbinus' play gets new venue

■ Katherine Mirani
Editor-in-Chief



Staff photo by Chris Alessandrini

The cast of Columbinus rehearses a scene in the Blackbox Theater. Originally set to be performed at LHS, the play was instead shown at the Calderwood Pavilion in Boston.

The student-directed production of "Columbinus," a play about the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School, has found a new home after being canceled at Lexington High School.

"Columbinus" premiered at the Calderwood Pavilion in Boston on April 15, 16 and 17, according to director Emma Feinberg, a junior.

"I'm really excited that this play is now not only at LHS anymore," Feinberg said. "It has opened up a lot of people's eyes."

Feinberg had originally planned to stage the play in the Blackbox Theater at LHS and began work in September. Jeffrey Leonard, the coordinator of performing arts, helped Feinberg with the logistics of her project.

Leonard also showed a copy of the play to Principal Natalie Cohen, who did not read the play at the time. Leonard said he wanted to make her aware of the project, but nothing more.

Feinberg spent the next few months blocking and casting "Columbinus." Days before she was to begin rehearsals on Jan. 10, Cohen received a call from Superintendent Paul Ash.

Ash told Cohen that an
[COLUMBINUS page 4]

Staff photo by Ben Robertson

Lexington's METCO Scholars program is in its second year.

METCO Scholars program gives support, mentoring

■ Caitlin Go
Staff Writer

It all started with a simple idea: narrow the achievement gap through mentoring.

What was born was METCO Scholars, a nascent program whose mission is to help METCO students reach new academic heights and become exceptional student leaders.

"We're another support group at the school, just another place that a student can go to find a supportive adult or other supportive students that are in their lives for a positive reason," said Lindsay Torres, one of the faculty members involved in the program.

"It's
[METCO page 6]

Junior to represent LHS at National History Day

■ Ellen Meyers
Staff Writer

Jonah Bader, a junior at Lexington High School, placed first in his category at the National History Day state competition.

Bader and fellow junior Michael Loughlin represented LHS at the state competition at Clark University in Worcester on April 9.

The national contest will be held from June 12 to 16 in Washington, D.C.

Bader and Loughlin placed first and second, respectively, in the Senior Historical Papers category at the regional level at Winchester High School on March 5.

Bader wrote a paper on the San Juan boundary dispute, and Loughlin wrote an essay on the Johnson administration and the Vietnam War.

Two sophomores, Spencer Daus-Haberle and Grace Ma, received honorable mentions in the Senior Individual Exhibit category and in Individual Website, respectively.

Daus-Haberle's project is titled "Morality versus Nationalism: Helmuth and Freya von Moltke and the Kreisau Circle Confront the Nazi Menace." Ma made a website on China's entry into the World Trade Organization.

Sophomores who take level I World History II and juniors who take AP U.S. History participated created projects relevant to this year's theme: Debate and Diplomacy: Successes, Failures, Consequences.

Juniors write eight-to-10-page essays, and sophomores had the op-
[NHD, page 6]

Eliminating honors classes gets rid of middle ground

■ Noah Star
Chris Alessandrini
Editors

Just last month, the halls of LHS were abuzz with talk of course selection. As students compete in the academic hierarchy of LHS, they often neglect to strike a balance between rigor and relaxation.

Many students choose to balance their schedules with a mixture of Advanced Placement classes and level 1 courses. Yet these students soon learn that there is a stark contrast between the workload and challenges of an AP class and those of a level 1 class.

Honors World History II served as a perfect middle ground between AP World History and level 1 World History II. The course attempted to mitigate the leveling problem plaguing all departments . However, the history department removed the course for multiple warranted reasons.

On paper, the honors and Level 1 courses had identical objectives. The curricula varied minimally – some projects were different, the textbooks were different and the workload in honors was more rigorous.

Rob Collins, the head of the Social Studies department, said that in past years, there were on average three sections of AP World History and three to four sections of Honors World History. That translates to about 60 to 80 students taking honors per year.

Currently, there are five AP World History classes, which indicates that a majority of the students who would have taken honors opted for the AP rather than the level 1 course.

The truth is that some of these students opting for the AP are not developmentally ready for the class. AP World History's curriculum is highly theoretical – it is a drastic change of pace for most students, as history class usually follows a more linear route.

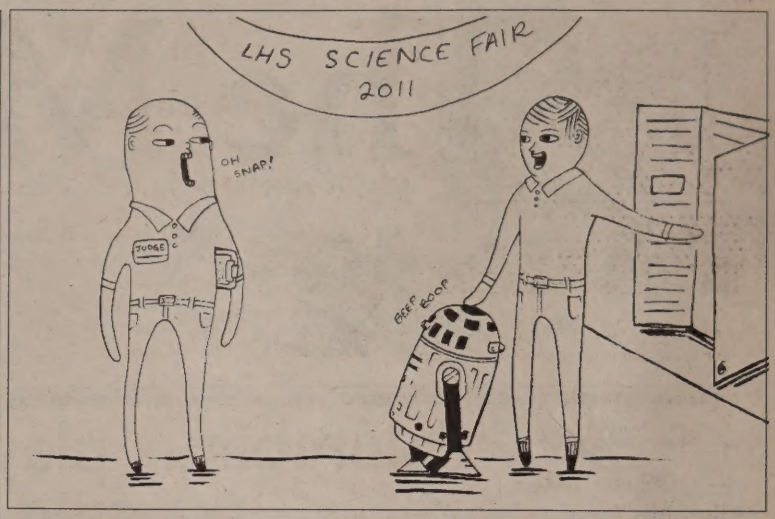
AP World focuses on overarching themes and patterns. Honors World History had a heavy workload, but it followed a more linear path, thus acting as a solid transitional class for sophomores not yet ready for the course.

The overarching leveling disparity also hurts those students who intentionally decided to take level 1 classes. Teachers often attempt to amp up the difficulty of their class to appease students seeking a greater challenge. In the process, the rest of the class is left behind. Is this really raising the bar for the class as a whole? Or does this further marginalize students who did not want or expect a stress-ridden schedule?

Given these consequences, the decision to remove Honors World History was not easy.

Even now the decision is divisive among myriad educators. Collins said that some teachers make the argument that leveling decisions for freshman history teachers were overwhelming – how exactly does one decide if a student is ready for an AP or honors?

Others still argue that honors is the perfect middle ground for the students making the transition from the unleveled freshman history class to an AP. Even if an intermediate level is not academically necessary for success in higher levels, it still has the potential to psy- [LEVELS, page 7]



Comic by Andrew Goulet

Science fair unnecessary for AP

■ Susmita Gadre
Layout Editor

Every winter, LHS students compete in the science fair. These students are taking an Advanced Placement science class and are required to complete an original research project that is worth 10 percent of their grade and is required for AP credit at LHS.

Participation in the fair is optional, while completing a project and writing a follow-up paper is not. Seniors can complete a similarly challenging engineering project in place of entering the science fair. However, making this project a requirement in the AP curriculum seems unnecessary.

The coursework of an AP science class is understandably more challenging than the curriculum of lower-level classes. Because AP exams are held in early May, students have only eight months to completely cover the curriculum (approximately a month less than the other science classes have) to complete significantly more work. Even with an extra block per week, AP science teachers have to rush to finish the curriculum in time.

Students have to work diligently to meet the demanding rigor of AP classes, and most want to focus on the classwork since it constitutes the majority of their grade. The necessity of designing and executing a research project entirely from scratch only adds more stress.

In AP classes, the nature of the curriculum means that labs are greater both in number and complexity. Students occasionally must create their own procedures, in addition to actually completing the experiment and analyzing the results, meaning that the major parts of the scientific method are already covered in class.

Yet, there are also merits to science fair. Composing and completing a research project means that students will learn more about a subject that they would not have ordinarily been able to study. The project itself is a learning experience in time management. But for some students, the stress of the assignment outweighs any benefits it may bring.

As of last year, students in all levels and grades are required to complete an additional engineering project. The goal of this project is to construct a model that functions for a specific use.

It forces students to think creatively and do original scientific work, a component sometimes missing in the day to day lectures of a high school science class. AP students, however, have already had the chance to do such work in their science fair projects.

Two challenging projects puts more unnecessary work on already stressed AP students. If science fair must be an integral part of the curriculum, then AP students should be exempted from the additional engineering project.

The science fair is a long-standing tradition at LHS, but the science department should consider the project's true value in the life of an AP student.

Despite debate, security cameras have faded into the background

■ Anish Kanesa-Thasan
Staff Writer

At the end of 2009, the Lexington Police Department received a federal grant to install 130 security cameras across the LHS campus.

Before then, cameras had been installed at Clarke Middle School and Fiske and Harrington elementary schools, as well as in other schools throughout Massachusetts. Recently, in last September, a draft security camera policy was written up by a town subcommittee.

With the cameras came a debate over their effects. Opponents of the cameras said that they violated student privacy. Proponents argued that the cameras were necessary for student safety and justice. More than a year later, the issue seems to have died down. Community opinions of the cameras, though, remain mixed.

According to an online poll conducted by the Lexington Minuteman last September, 52 percent of Lexington residents voted that they were in favor of security cameras in Lexington schools. Forty-three percent voted that they were not.

More than a year later, the debate has still not been resolved. However, it seems as if fewer people are concerned about the cameras now than directly after they were installed. But what exactly happened to lessen the debate?

The most obvious answer seems to be that the cameras have finally proven their effectiveness and necessity.

Last April, a 16-year-old LHS student, her stepsister, and their stepmother attacked another student outside of the school.

Lt. Det. Manny Ferro said in the Minuteman,"[The security camera system] helped [the Police Department] find the assailants and bring them to justice."

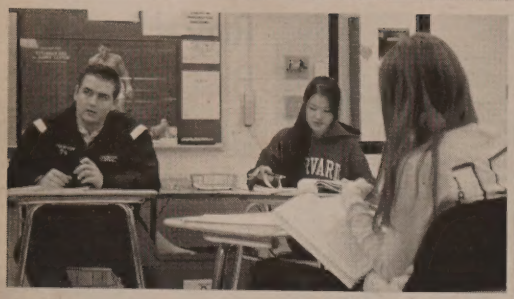
"It's really about creating a safer campus," Superintendent Paul Ash said in an interview with the Minuteman in September. "[The cameras allow] us to see things in public places that perhaps shouldn't be taking place."

In September, the camera policy was tailored to prevent privacy violations. Most students seem to think that the security cameras do not pose a threat to their personal privacy. Junior Andrew Chang said that he thought the cameras had little effect on the majority of students.

"There haven't been any complaints of privacy violations of any sorts. I think people understand that it's a part of making the school safer, and no one's really being hurt by it except those that are culpable of doing stuff they shouldn't be."

Most students seem to feel the same way. Leo Ip, a sophomore, said he feels that, "unless the video is disclosed [to the public], it is not a breach of [his] personal privacy."

After over a year of hype and debate, it appears that the conflict over security cameras in the public school system has dissipated. Students do not believe that their privacy is being violated, which was the main concern regarding the cameras in the first place. So far, it looks like the cameras are here to stay.



Staff photo by Arman Bilge

Peter Crampton and Christine Lung do exercises to practice for their upcoming economics competition in the spring.

Economics Club practices for competitions in April

■ Hoda Yehia
Staff Writer

During the current recession, the importance of economics has been magnified, and burgeoning economists have had ample fodder for discussion. Now, at LHS, there is a club devoted to the study of this discipline.

Economics Club was created this year, sparked by a love for economics and a desire to participate in the various economics challenges in the Boston area.

Christine Lung, president and founder of the club, along with economics teacher William Cole and math teacher Ed Unger, work together to run Economics Club. The club's main goal is to prepare for economics competitions in April, as well as to teach students about the different aspects of economics.

There are no requirements to be a part of Economics Club.

"As long as you want to learn, just come," said Lung.

Cole said, "We have some students that are not enrolled in economics courses at all and some [CLUB page 7]

English class change adds variety

■ Tyler Vendetti
A&E Editor

Starting in September, Lexington High School's senior class electives will change from being full-year classes to semester classes.

According to Elizabeth Crowell, the head of the English Department at LHS, the goal of the change was to provide diversity.

"We wanted to offer a greater variety of options for students to choose from, " Crowell said. "We want students to pick classes that they'll love and not base their choices on who the teacher is or how difficult the class is rumored to be."

While some of the courses will undergo minor changes to accommodate their shorter duration, others will be more drastic.

Creative writing, which currently encompasses memoir, fiction and poetry, will be divided into separate electives: Writing Memoir/Fiction, The Short Story, and Poetry.

British Literature, a popular choice among current seniors, now will be two courses: Great Brit, Great Lit, which will act as an introduction to British literature, and Knights in Tights, a course more focused on medieval and fantastical aspects of the field.

The most straightforward change is the division of the Shakespeare course, which will be split into Shakespeare I and Shakespeare II. Neither course is a prerequisite for the other.

With this limited time frame, teachers will be forced to reorganize much of the material and structure within each class, which could be detrimental to the courses as a whole.

"That's the downside of the change, that some classes may not be able to fit in everything that they want," Crowell said. "That's why we've tried to tweak some of the choices, to compensate by making new classes."

For this reason, some students at LHS have disapproved of the decision. Catherine Sibert, a senior, said, "I think there are some classes that lend themselves very well to being semester classes and others that are going to be really hard to split in [ENGLISH page 7]

collegebored

Finger-crossing time once more

■ Ally Engelberg
Columnist

It was a typical Wednesday night consisting of some homework, "Modern Family" and a college freak-out or two. The weather was finally showing some signs of spring, which was great except that it only further reminded me of the April 1 date that was looming not-so-far-ahead. On April 1, of course, I would hear back from most of the colleges I applied to.

A friend was over and we were perusing the college book during a study break, our intensely loved, giver-of-all-good Princeton Review "Best 371 Colleges," 2010 edition, when, suddenly, the front cover fell off. One minute it was on, and the next it was off, lying on the counter, completely detached, worn down from too much use.

It had endured too many rounds of the college game, a game where we flip to three random pages of the book and choose which of the three schools we'd rather attend.

It had endured too many flips to the pages of our top colleges as we read and reread the glowing reviews until we had basically memorized the words. We were, I realized then, done.

About a year before, I was in Barnes & Noble buying a few books when I saw this very college book on the shelf, pristine and unwrinkled and dazzling with the allure of the college process.

Since then, the book has become nothing less than a physical manifestation of my college journey.

It displays my year-long saga of constructing a college list that has been edited and researched a thousand times, the many college visits, applications, interviews, standardized tests, the college game and endless stress.

And this college book has been loved.

On the bottom of Wesleyan University's page is a scribbled Chinese take-out order. On the first page is a schedule that I made [COLLEGE, page 7]

Photo courtesy of William Cole

Nobel Laureate Peter Diamond, pictured here with William Cole and students Kevin Lai, Chris Chan, and Mike McCartin, came to LHS on March 3 to speak about economics.

Cafeteria Advisory Board created in order to collect student feedback on lunch items

■ Anubhav Jain
News Editor

The Cafeteria Advisory Board was created by the Student-Faculty Senate through the passage of a bill.

The Senate Climate Committee began to draw up a bill at the end of 2010, and the bill was passed on Jan. 5, 2011.

Noah Star, co-chairman of the Senate Climate Committee, along with Jonah Bader, another senator on the Climate Committee, coauthored the bill.

Several years ago, Nancy Wiseman, the director of dining services for the Lexington Public Schools, came to the Senate asking for student feedback on the food the cafeteria serves, said Jim Williams, a math teacher and faculty senator on the Climate Committee. The board is intended to provide such feedback.

After its official inception next year, the board will create a mission statement, Williams said. The board will report back to the Senate each year.

Williams added that there are plans to create a temporary advisory board by inviting volunteers that will be chosen by the Climate Committee.

Later on in the spring, there will be elections for a committee consisting of two students per grade to serve on the board next year with annual elections thereafter, Williams said. Wiseman will chair the board.

"Working on the menu and getting student feedback about food is expected to be a big part of the committee's business," Williams said.

According to Williams, the committee might also investigate making the cafeteria more eco-friendly, examining the possibilities of composting, more recycling and switching to biodegradable plates.

To gauge interest of the student body, the Climate Committee put up two posters earlier this year asking students for suggestions on how to improve the cafeteria.

"From the input we got, it definitely seemed like people were interested," said Hannah Ornatowski, co-chairwoman of the Climate Committee.

She also said, "People definitely seemed interested in issues regarding the cafeteria, which is really understandable because lunch is essential to being energized for school and also to just relax. With the right cooperation between the cafeteria administrators, students and [CAFETERIA, page 6]

'Drood' will be humorous, light-hearted

■ Lydia Gold
Staff Writer

May is quickly approaching, as is this year's spring musical, which will be "Drood," based on Charles Dickens' famous unfinished novel "The Mystery of Edwin Drood."

Dickens died before he finished the book, which in turn has led to various interpretations of how the book should end.

The musical version of the novel is presented as a play within a play. It opens with the actors preparing for the first showing of "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." Then the plot gets underway.

The main character is Edwin Drood, set to marry a woman named Rosa Bud. Trouble arises when both Edwin's uncle and another man, Neville Landless, are also in love with Rosa. Soon after meeting Neville, it seems Edwin has disappeared. No one knows where he is or what happened to him, though some suspect murder.

Staff photo by Adam Forstall

The cast of "Drood," a musical based on Charles Dickens' unfinished novel "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," rehearses after school for the production, which will be performed in May.

Since Dickens never finished the novel, the audience is left to decide the fate of the characters. Those involved in "Drood" said that this is one of the best aspects of the play.

"There's a ton of audience involvement; I'm really looking forward to seeing the cast scramble to play out whichever ending the audience picks," said Sophie Harari, one of the show's assistant directors.

Along with creating an excitingly unique play, the writer Rupert Holmes seemed to have other intentions as well.

"I think Drood was created to celebrate both Charles Dickens and the rambunctious music halls that sprung up around London after 1850. Hopefully the show will inspire the audience to look into both areas," said Harari.

The play seems to be one of the more lighthearted LHS productions.

"There is no particular message to this show. It is purely entertainment" said Steven Bogart, the director of the show.

"As opposed to a lot of shows the high school has put on in the past, 'Drood' is just a really silly and fun show to learn and to perform," Harari said.

The musical should be just as fun for the audience as it is for the cast.

"People who don't like musicals will most likely love this show. The cast breaks the fourth wall way too much for anyone to get bored during the performance, and I expect every audience member will leave with a smile on their

Royal India Bistro has great food, relaxed vibe

■ Dan Bernstein
Staff Writer

From the outside, the newly introduced Royal India Bistro on Meriam Street seems more like a dimly lit bar than a calm, charming South Asian restaurant. With a protruding counter and rows of assorted alcohol lining the back wall, Bistro appears to have little activity going on within.

But upon entering, the aroma of cumin and masala immediately penetrate the senses. The perceived "dim" lighting is actually the soft glow of red hanging lights and white candles glow on each table against spotless, simple tablecloths.

With so much variety, ranging from chicken specialties to nearly a dozen different types of Indian bread, deciding what to eat can be overwhelming. With a bit of help from the friendly servers, though, the real delights of the restaurant are [BISTRO, page 7]

Owner of revamped Lexington Video hopes to continue drawing in residents

■ Sophie Harari
A&E Editor

When Lexington Center's only remaining video store, Videosmith, closed this past October, many residents feared the library would be the only outlet for last minute video needs.

Luckily, Sue McDonald, a veteran Videosmith employee, had always been interested in buying the shop and jumped at the opportunity to purchase it, promptly renaming it Lexington Video.

Videosmith was making a fair amount of money when the switch happened, and Lexington Video maintains this success with 1,000 new sign-ups in its first seven weeks.

About two-thirds of the videos were sold in the transfer, but McDonald obtained a few thousand videos from the Salem branch of Videosmith and continues working to replace all the new releases.

Although Lexington Video will be similar to Videosmith, McDonald is revamping some aspects of the store. She hopes to create a website and newsletter, interact with other local businesses, create special Oscar sections and perhaps "character or actors of the month" sections as well.

McDonald believes that Lexington Video can be successful, saying that she sees the store as a "little sapling that will grow into a big strong tree."

In the new world of Netflix, Red Box and Hulu, it is becoming increasingly difficult for movie rental stores around the country to stay in business.

Blockbuster, one of the biggest video franchises in the country, filed for bankruptcy in September and, according to the New York Times, has closed over a thousand stores in the past three years.

Netflix has 20 million subscribers, a number equal to the entire population of Australia, and enjoyed a revenue of $2.2 billion in 2010. Netflix boasts a huge selection of foreign, classic, and still-in-theaters films, but there remains some charm in driving to a local video store to rent a movie.

Avid movie fan Tim Childs, a sophomore, praised Netflix for being "often cheaper and more convenient," but said that video stores are still essential because one can "look around and find a variety of movies you wouldn't discover otherwise," such as foreign and independent films. He said he fears that as movie stores close and Netflix membership increases, people will only seek out recently released movies and that their "knowledge of old Hollywood will dissolve."

McDonald said that major movie studios actually release many titles to video stores 28 days before Netflix and Red Box get them.

She also emphasizes the importance of a personal shopping experience and impulse finds when comparing the store to Netflix.

Indeed, Childs explains that some of his favorite movies, such as "Boogie Nights," "Old Boy" and "The Apartment," were found by chance on the shelves at Videosmith.

Lexington needs a video store because all great towns should have great video stores, just as they should have crowded ice cream parlors, family-owned deli counters and well-stocked libraries. There's nothing quite like talking movies with a stranger over the stacks or behind the counter of a video store.

Visit Lexington Video at 172 Bedford St, Lexington, MA 02420.

Columbinus

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

anonymous parent had called to complain about the play's language, violent content and use of weapons. Cohen then read the play and decided it was not appropriate for production at LHS, she said.

"It's an emotional decision for me," she said. "I'm philosophically opposed to censorship. I never thought I'd have a line, but this was over the line."

Her choice was not just about the harsh language in the play, but also about the depiction of violence "that's not redeemable or controllable." Cohen said she worried about students seeing the play and having no support network or discussion to understand what they had seen.

Leonard was supportive of Cohen in her decision.

"I really do believe she has the best interests of the kids and school at heart all the time," he said. "She's been put in a tough place."

He also praised her for meeting with the cast face-to-face to discuss the cancellation.

Feinberg, however, was not swayed by Cohen's message.

"I felt like there was never a legitimate reason why it was canceled, other than the fact that Paul Ash said so," she said of the decision.

John Crittenden, a senior and a cast member of "Columbinus," called attention to the difficult subject matter in past LHS plays.

"Why is doing this play different from the somewhat controversial plays we've done in the past?" Crittenden said. "Why is this the one to get canceled? It just wasn't clear."

Feinberg managed to secure her new venue, the Calderwood Pavilion, with help from Steven Bogart, a drama teacher at LHS. She now has a mostly new cast.

Cohen allowed Feinberg to rehearse in the Blackbox despite the fact that the school refused to sanction a production at LHS.

"In a lot of ways, it's turned into a big win," Leonard said. "She's going to have a much bigger audience, she's got a different cast, she's got a beautiful space to perform it in, and we've raised a lot more awareness."

Feinberg said she is also pleased with the course the play has taken. The amount of publicity "Columbinus" received after being canceled helped to foster a dialogue about censorship, theater and Columbine itself.

"I'm happy that people are talking about it," Feinberg said. "I think the play is doing what it needs to be doing."

La vie en France: The merits of vacation

■ Zoe Wood
Columnist

Such generosity, I had not experienced before. Sixty-eight families here in Rennes have opened their doors to sixty-eight American strangers. "Come live with us for a year," said these families. "We will give you a room of our house, we'll cook dinner for you every night, and we'll try our best to fully immerse you into the life of our family."

Generosity, in a nutshell. This is generosity that can be compared with that of the French vacation calendar.

Ten days at the end of October, two weeks for Christmas, two weeks for "les vacances d'hiver," followed by a two-week spring break.

The year is peppered with "jours ferries" and "ponts" or bridges: four day weekends.

Workers enjoy five weeks of paid vacation during the year (thanks to http://www.discoverfrance.net for that statistic). Retirement, up until this year, came at age 60, and sometimes even before.

Now, it may be easy to shake your head at these facts and say to yourself, "well life must be a whole lot easier and more enjoyable over there." Is life, in general, easier? Certainly not.

There is an enormous amount of pressure on French students, and the shorter stints of school are marked by prolonged days and higher concentrations of tests and "devoirs" than an LHS student may be accustomed to.

Those who work, (currently about 91 percent of the work-aged population) experience the same long, full days. No, the French are not workaholics in the way that Americans are, but there is something to be said for the fact that France is the proud owner of the world's fifth wealthiest economy.

But, is life more enjoyable? Of course, I am in no position to answer this question. I do not really go to French school, nor am I a part of the French work force. All I can say is that there is something to be said for sufficient time to decompress in between [FRANCE, page 8]

Staff photo by Adam Forstall

All girls a cappella group Onomatopoeia kept the atmosphere light with their fun costumes and enthusiastic performance.

Photo courtesy of Edward Ha

Mixed group PB&J made their jamboree debut memorable with well rehearsed songs and Wizard of Oz-inspired outfits.

Annual Winter Jam displays the strength of a cappella at LHS

■ Anisa Haque
Staff Writer

On March 5, Lexington High School hosted the annual Winter A Capella Jamboree. The show featured the high school's seven student-run a cappella groups and a special guest group, the MIT Logarhythms.

LHS's newest group, Peanut Butter and Jelly, sang three pieces in Wizard of Oz-themed costumes.

Pitchpipes, an all-male a cappella group, followed the newcomers. They performed hilarious gags such as winding members up in scarves and throwing rose petals, helping make them one of the most entertaining acts of the night.

Euphoria, a female group, rocked a set including "Live Like We're Dying" and "Grenade," all while wearing mustaches.

The other male group, Rock Paper Scissors, followed. They came onto the stage with a chair and a shoe box, leaving the audience curious as to how the props would be used.

After three amazing songs, including Adrian Tanner's fantastic rendition of the song "New Shoes," the audience finally got clued in. The shoe box contained the last song's "new shoes."

Mixed Nuts made their entrance prom-style, amusing the audience as each different couple made their way across the stage. Both the costumes and the music were incredible, especially the duet from Shannon Boudett and Felix Cancre on the song "Mine."

As soon as Mixed Nuts exited, sleeping bags began inching their way across the stage. The lights went out, and members of Guacamole dressed as butterflies appeared out of the darkness. Excellent singing kept the antenna and wings from being a distraction.

The last group was Onomatopoeia, wearing crayon costumes. They performed "Speechless" and "Somewhere Only We Know," finishing with a Justin Bieber medley. Overall, Ono left the audience wanting more.

The MIT Logarhythms, a guest group featuring LHS alumnus Tommy Moriarty, performed three incredible songs for the finale, ending Winter Jam on a great note.

Student band C.F.P. aims for diversity, fluidity

■ Alex Stuart
Staff Writer

Lexington High School is a hotbed for local bands.

Organizations like S.M.A.D. and G.W.A.C. hold music nights and never have any trouble filling up the time slots; the challenging part has been getting the list of bands down to an acceptable size.

Of all the Lexington bands, however, few get a guaranteed spot at shows, fewer see widespread success and even fewer find that success as quickly as C.F.P. has.

Their instant notoriety may be attributed to two factors, the first and foremost being their unique and dedicated approach to their style of music.

The band wishes "to be constantly invoking new ideas and thoughts both musically and performance-wise" C.F.P. members said in an email, which they do by taking influence from many music genres, including classical, jazz, funk, pop and rap, as well as artists like Michael Jackson, Kanye West, Dave Matthews Band, Mos Def, Talib Kweli, Roy Hargrove and Herbie Hancock.

This ideal is represented by the band's name, which in full is Constant Flow Producers: a constant flow of ideas and influences keep this band on top of their game.

This diversity does two important things that help elevate the band's popularity: it diversifies the music and helps appeal to a wide range of audiences.

Another reason the band flourishes so much is its core group of fans. At the band's first performance in 2010, many students came to the show as supportive friends and left as genuine fans. After attending a C.F.P. concerts, it is not hard to see why.

Constant Flow Producers is currently made up of 10 members: vocalists Mike Chang, Cam Perry and Aaron Holtzclaw; pianist Atri Raychowdhury; bassist Beejul Khatri; drummer Adam Kane; guitarist Matt Bathon; violinists and vocalists Rachel Iba and Yasmeen Al-Mazeedi; and trumpeter Evan Marcantonio.

C.F.P.'s ability to play live elevates them above other rap and hip-hop groups. The audience is not forced to watch one man rap over an electronic beat; instead, they are treated to an energy-filled band who play as one, constantly flowing organism of music.

Photo courtesy of Atri Raychowdhury

C.F.P., comprised of current and former LHS students, keeps their audience interested with a variety of musical styles.

While the group does rap, the singing, drum, guitar and trumpet solos transcend C.F.P. past the stifling label of rap or hip-hop.

When asked what type of genre they would classify themselves as, they responded, "It's hard to classify us into a particular style of music just because we are still trying to find our niche. We try hard not to try to sound like someone else. We try to sound like ourselves...for now, we classify our music as: the unique music of C.F.P."

C.F.P has truly found fast success. They have performed with Chris Webby, Mac Miller, Aloe Blacc, Termanology, Cam Meekins, Matt Clarke, Jon Kilmer and Rite Hook. They have also received attention from Sam Adams, Slaine, Termanology, DJ Cash, and DJ Doubletake and have even gotten an offer for a nationwide tour opening for the band The On Fires.

Because some band members are now in college, Constant Flow Producers does not unite as often as they would like, but this does not stop them from discussing new music, writing new songs and improving their craft. The band hopes to release some singles, EPs and eventually a full CD, but they "don't want to rush anything," they said in the email.

National History Day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tion of exhibit, documentary or website, and some students' papers and projects went to compete in the school-wide NHD competition in February.

"It was awarding to finish [my] website and finding it on the Internet," Ma said. "[I] also learned about interesting things that I didn't expect to be related to the topic."

LHS sent 16 students to the regional competition.

Caitlin Hughes, Emily Lowry and Nur Akkurt, all sophomores, also advanced to the regional competition.

In the Senior Historical Papers category, Matthew Arbesfeld, Bader, Conor Bloomer, Jenna Grady, Anubhav Jain, Mina Li, Loughlin, and Moira McCavana made it to the regional contest, along with Alison Marqusee, a senior.

Although some students view the requirement to do a history project as time-consuming and stressful, the history teachers see it as an opportunity to enrich student learning.

"The juniors have always done well and their efforts always pay off," said Lawrence David, an AP U.S. History teacher. "[NHD] pushes kids to do something on their own. It would be a shame if NHD got cut off."

Unfortunately, that scenario is plausible. Like other national educational programs, NHD is a congressional earmark, and NHD has been fighting to keep its funding as Congress works to eliminate earmarks. If its federal funding is discontinued, NHD will have to rely more on donations or might even have to shut down.

"I think [NHD] would go on, but it may cost students more to enter," said Jennifer Sears, the coordinator of the Greater Boston regional contest. "We are looking at ways for fundraising in the state and will accept any donations. We are hoping to get a business or museum to sponsor us, but it is hard times for all."

Cafeteria Board

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

teachers, I truly think that some great changes are going to come about soon."

Williams added: "The Senate Climate Committee is pretty excited about this committee. Both Chartwells and the student body are interested in regular communication with the goal of improving things."

Some students are less optimistic about the prospect of the board having an impact.

"I'm not sure what kind of difference an advisory board for lunches would have given the fact that the main problem with the cafeteria lies more in food rather than other menial issues," said Andrew Chang, a junior. However, Ben Ong, a sophomore, looks to the new board with hope.

"The school lunches are terrible because the food is too dry and oily, so I hope that the new advisory board will be able to improve it."

The Secret Lives of Teachers

Ninjas or Pirates?

"Pirates, obviously. There are parrots and eyepatches involved."
Ms. Strizhak, English

"Clearly ninjas! I'm a black belt in taekwondo and I love the karate kid and three little ninjas movies."
Ms. Gochman, history

In a Hollywood movie about your life, who would play you?

Paul Rudd. He reveals the humor in the life of 30-year-old middle class suburban man.
Mr. Despres, English

Janeane Garofalo. I look like her and she has a very dry sense of humor.
Ms. Anderson, librarian

Favorite weekday?

Wednesday. It's the middle of the week and I'm happy to be at work, but it also means that the weekend is coming soon.
Sr. Shadbegian, Spanish

Metco Scholars

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

certainly not a magic formula," said William Cole, another faculty member involved in the program. "It's just people getting together in a room, talking about what they'd like to do, how they'd like to make a difference and then just doing it. There's nothing brilliant about its design, but it seems to be helping."

Cole, Torres, Jennifer Wolcott, Frank Stevenson and METCO Academic Director Barbara Nobles oversee the program and support the scholars: 17 sophomores, juniors and seniors in the METCO program chosen for their academic achievements and leadership potential.

"We are focusing on the relationship piece," Cole said. "Having high expectations is critical for students of color to achieve, having outstanding teachers work with them is absolutely critical, but the third piece is definitely having relationships be built between the students themselves and between the students and the faculty members."

Strong relationships have allowed students to open up to each other and provide academic and emotional support. At meetings, the students share their transcripts, and then they compliment one another and hold each other responsible for keeping to the Scholar standards.

"My favorite part about being a METCO Scholar is that I have been able to share my experiences to other Lexington METCO students, where I have learned to overcome academic struggles," said METCO Scholar Isabella Brandao, a junior. "Also, being a METCO Scholar, I have been able to create a new group of friends and feel like I have been involved in an overall positive experience."

The scholars also act as mentors for younger students in the METCO program. "I think my favorite part is watching [the Scholars] work with younger students, think about the impact they can have, to see and realize the positive impact that they can have on the younger students," said Torres.

In addition to visits to the Lexington elementary and middle schools, the METCO Scholars also hold fundraisers, do community service, visit colleges and attend talks by guest speakers.

"As a METCO scholar I have gained leadership abilities and have been able to share that with other Lexington METCO students," Brandao said. "I have learned to cope with stress and become a team leader."

These results typify what leaders envisioned when they began to design the METCO Scholars program three years ago. Based mainly off the MAC program of Shaker Heights High School in Ohio, the pilot program was launched during the 2009-2010 school year.

Student feedback has helped to develop the program, which is still drafting its plan for the future.

"The kids have been terrific," said Cole. "They took risks last year, that first group. And then this group has really done a great job of, as I say, taking the work that was already been done and just exploding it so that we're doing a lot more mentoring. It's moving forward, because of the kids."

As the program develops, its mission remains the same: to give METCO students the opportunities and resources necessary to become capable, outstanding, successful leaders.

FY12 Budget

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of the Lexington Education Association, spoke against the plan at a School Committee meeting.

"Educators are the foundation and cornerstone of our youth's learning experience," she said. "In examining Dr. Ash's recommended operating budget and supplementary additions, I am disappointed and somewhat dismayed by some of the items on each."

The hiring of a data coordinator also faced criticism, but Ash defended the decision.

"We have an underutilized system," Ash said before the School Committee. "[The data coordinator will] improve communication between home and school and schedule school more effectively."

Kevin Kelly, a math teacher at LHS, currently handles scheduling and is paid a stipend for that duty.

Dave Walsh, an English teacher at LHS, also voiced his opposition to Ash's budget.

"There are additions to the budget that are troubling when you put them up against the proposed subtractions," Walsh said at the School Committee meeting.

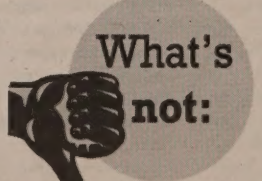
The discussion of the budget demonstrated the clear divide between the LPS administration and the educators in the LPS system. Ash must concern himself with the logistics and funding that allow education to occur, while teachers should instead focus on the education itself.

"A lot of things that happen in class cannot be measured in data," Walsh said. "So much of what happens in classrooms, in counselors' offices and in speech and language offices, are immeasurable and invaluable." Walsh's comments were met with applause from fellow teachers.

Above all, Neufeld said, "We need to keep the best interests of the children of Lexington in our minds as we navigate these treacherous [budgetary] waters."

Despite their differences, Ash echoed this belief: "Our goal is to provide the best possible education."

- Panera opening in Lexington Center
- Wall of Rejection
- Getting down on Friday



- Standardized testing
- Noisy radiators that sound like ghosts
- Cam's Auto School suddenly shutting down

LEVELS - PAGE 2

chologically prepare a student to take a more rigorous course.

The honors history experiment should structure the educational paradigm of departments across the school. To encourage intellectual diversity and true learning, it is necessary for LHS to bring back an intermediate course level in all disciplines. Not only would this benefit those students seeking an intense schedule, but it would also give students who feel uncomfortable taking an AP the opportunity to participate in a more challenging learning experience.

BISTRO - PAGE 5

revealed. The most popular among them are the chicken tikka masala, a well-known dish, and the aloo palak, a spinach and potato combination.

The vegetable mixed appetizers dish which came first, with two pieces of vegetable pakora, aloo tikki and cheese pakora, centered around a plump samosa, is great for those looking for a small-scale meal.

All four starters are unique in their own right. The strange appearance of the vegetable pakora does nothing to lessen the satisfying crunch of the shell and the succeeding soft melt of shredded spinach and potato in your mouth, an unexpected enjoyment.

After ordering the shami chicken kabob and the chicken tikka masala, the poori, a thin blown-up bread, arrives and immediately deflates at the first tear. With each bite saturated in any one of the many sauces carried on one of the other dishes, the poori is a marvelous supplement to any entrée you may choose.

The shami kabob, tasting like sausage and basil, pales in comparison to the masala.

The chicken tikka masala does not fall short of its high praise. While perhaps lacking in size, the chicken bits served in a delicious tomato sauce are no less spicy and sensational than the server claimed. Highest recommendations go to this dish, but avoid it if you don't enjoy some real hot spice.

Despite the small sitting area, Bistro boasts almost a dozen tables, some with booths and others with traditional, metallic chairs. With authentic music softly playing in the background, the atmosphere is relaxed. A cheery feeling radiates from the snowflake lights draped across the windows, which creates a comfortable, family-friendly environment.

Perfect for a dinner with the family or a half-day lunch with friends, Royal India Bistro is sure to take a place in Lexington center's dining community.

ENGLISH - PAGE 3

half."

Senior Brigid Gorry-Hines, co-president of Lexington High School's creative writing club, The Writer's Block, also voiced her concern about changing classes mid-year.

"I feel like with the writing class in particular, you establish a solid group of people that you feel comfortable sharing your work with," she said. "Changing all the people messes it up."

Although non-senior students have not had personal experience with the current elective setup, many still have opinions about the subject.

"One downside is that we don't know which teachers are teaching which classes," said Rebecca Galin, a junior who is editor-in-chief of Folio, the school's literary magazine. "Regardless of class material, a teacher can always make or break a class."

Not everyone, though, entirely disapproves of the change.

"I'm really jealous that we didn't have these options," said senior Allie Kerper. "The classes sound awesome and only having semester courses allows for so much more variety."

The specificity of some of the courses will allow students to pick subjects more suited for their interests.

"There are so many different types of creative writing that, if you're only interested in one type and not the other than this set up is good for that," said Alison Marqusee, a senior.

Teachers will also be affected by the changes.

"There are certain trade-offs that full year courses enable you to do," said Kathi Macklis, an English teacher who teaches Modern Literature. "Full year courses allow teachers to develop a different, more comfortable relationship with the students than half-year courses would. However, at the same time, having half-year courses gives us the ability to reach a larger number of students.

"Some people are hesitant to change," Macklis continued, "because they've perfected a certain approach or developed a sort of groove, so it might take some time to get accustomed to it in the beginning."

Crowell said, "I personally approve of the decision. I think it definitely adds to the curriculum and allows for change. Some teachers may say they don't mind teaching the same thing over and over again but I think, secretly, they do. The goal here is to add variety for both the students and the teachers. Changing is good for everyone."

COLLEGE - PAGE 3

for a night of finals studying last spring.

There are annotations, like on Harvard's page my father wrote GO FOR IT! (Don't worry, I did not actually apply to Harvard despite my father's well wishing).

An annotation stands from when my uncle was in town and left a note on the page of his alma matter. Under the Student Body section, he wrote best looking and most successful on a yellow sticky note and placed it on top of the actual text. It's still there.

Later in the game, once I was deferred from my top college in December, my friend and I took some time to highlight all the bad phrases on that college's page in consolation (we could only find a few, all of which we admitted to actually liking a week later).

The book is dogeared and underlined, spilled-on and bent, and it's almost time for it to finally be retired.

As of now, mid-March, it's the bottom of the ninth. The score is 4-3. I'm down by one, my best hitter is coming up, and the bases are loaded. Now we're crossing our fingers and hoping for a grand slam.

LACROSSE- PAGE 8

[they will] be tough to go up against and tough to score on."

It is essential that each position brings their skill levels to their highest, but also that these skills are connected on the field in a unified manner.

Captain Bollag-Miller feels that the team's offense is "very fluid and made up of a lot of very naturally athletic guys. This makes our offense very creative and free-flowing, which has created a lot of trouble for opponents in the past."

The focus will also be on closing out their games and gaining those final points that cost the team the league championship last year.

"This year we could go far in the tournament, but in order to do that we need to capitalize," Bollag-Miller said.

THANK YOU

to our generous donors! These "Angels" donated $50 or more to support the Musket. We couldn't do it without you!

- Kathleen Mirani
- Joanne Kuo & Alessandro Alessandrini
- Janine Cohen
- Sachi & Cheena Srinivasan
- Amy Newmark & Bob Heingartner
- Sarah Arnholz & Christopher Wood

CLUB - PAGE 3

students that are in AP, and everything in between."

After learning about the National Economics Challenge, Lung started the club to recruit members to compete and to express her own interest in economics.

"I'm really interested in economics, so I wanted to make a club for it, and teach underclassmen who want to know more about economics," said Lung.

The club runs during Z block every Wednesday, and its meetings consist of solving problems and evaluating economic concepts.

"Usually I teach the underclassmen something, and then get the seniors on the computer to practice, or give them multiple choice questions to look at," Lung said about a typical meeting.

Currently, the club is preparing for two major competitions, the Harvard Fed Challenge and the National Economics Challenge.

"So these two tournaments, we've actually had teams go to in the past, students in the AB Economics classes that have gone to them, and we've done well. A couple of years ago, we won the Harvard competition," said Cole.

Some members of the club participate in these competitions, but others do not.

"Some kids are just in the club because they want to do the activity after school, and some can't make it after school and want to go to competitions," said Cole.

Looking to the future, the club is hoping that more people, especially underclassmen, will join. The club leaders emphasize that anyone with an interest in economics can join the club. In fact, some current members have been especially proactive.

"They've asked for sample questions so they can quiz each other, they seem to get a lot of enjoyment out of taking quizzes," said Cole. "They also like explaining economic concepts to each other."

The club offers a unique opportunity to those passionate about economics.

"[Economics Club] gives me a forum that I would not have otherwise," said Brittany Logan, a freshman.

Musket Staff

2010 - 2011

Editors-in-Chief	Chris Alessandrini Katherine Mirani
Managing Editor	Nikhil Srinivasan
News Editor	Jonah Bader Anubhav Jain
Opinion Editors	Noah Star Catherine Zuo
A&E Editors	Sophie Harari Tyler Vendetti
Sports Editors	Zach Sabin Geargin Wilson
Layout Editors	Susmita Gadre Abby Heingartner
Copy Editors	Aileen Haque Danielle Peters Jamie Yang
Art Directors	Andrew Goulet Atri Raychowdhury
Staff Photographers	Arman Bilge Adam Forstall Geneva Kropper
Staff Writers	Ally Engelberg, Ellen Meyers, Catherine Qin, Anisa Haque, Rae Yen Tan, Caitlin Go, Nicole Sekula, Divya Dharmaraj, Zoe Wood, Araz Havan, Jeff Tsang, Sarah Zhang, Lydia Gold, Julia Sun, Anish Kanesa-Thasan, Stephanie Yost, Dan Bernstein, Hoda Yehia, Matti Schreibman
Faculty Adviser	Julie Kuo
Printing Services	J & S Printing, Inc.

Editorial opinions in The Musket do not necessarily reflect the policies of Lexington High School or its administration. Correspondence to The Musket c/o Lexington High School, 251 Waltham St., Lexington, MA 02421 or by e-mail to musketnews@gmail.com. Short, tasteful responses are welcome.

Spring lacrosse team has high expectations

■ Stephanie Yost
Staff Writer

Warmer weather is approaching, and with it comes spring sports for LHS students.

Many teams, including boys varsity lacrosse, have been preparing during the off-season for these upcoming months. The players have their work cut out for them, currently scheduled to play 19 games.

During the off-season, Coach David Walsh said he has been "less than gently reminding the men to be fit" for the season ahead.

He has a tough agenda laid out, and like the rest of the team, is ravenous for the league championship that they were so close to last year.

Many players have been staying in shape with indoor lacrosse leagues, programs like Dragon Conditioning and working out at Gold's Gym in Arlington.

More recently, the four senior captains, Conor Henrie, Russell Bollag-Miller, Eric Marcantonio and David Nardella, held captains' practices.

These four men are, Walsh said, "the best class of captains I've had. They are good examples on and off the field," and will get the team into shape for the upcoming battles ahead.

The team this year is composed of seniors who have developed as players over the past years.

Connor Zanin, a junior, is ready to "get rid of the rust, get our skills back in to shape, and prove to the Middlesex League that Lexington is boss."

As is the case for many sports teams, the group dynamic becomes stronger as the season progresses, especially after a close loss or a tiring practice, when team morale is tested. The group builds resilience and comes back stronger.

Walsh said, "This team has a disposition. They recover quickly, and are always focusing on the next task." He hopes that this attitude will be just as prevalent as it was last season, so that together they can channel it towards improvement.

Walsh said he feels that there can be progress in connecting the already-strong defense with the larger, more potent group of offensive players.

He believes that they should "put the two pieces together and

[LACROSSE, page 7]

Boys swimming ends on a high note

■ Catherine Qin
Staff Writer

The Lexington High School boys swim team successfully ended its season this winter with a 4-0-1 record, tying with Reading for the league championship title.

Although the league meet was canceled because of snow, several members of the team still went on to represent Lexington at the 2011 Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association boys state meet, which took place on Saturday, Feb. 19, at Harvard University.

The Lexington state roster consisted of senior captains Daniel Mock and Michael McCartin; senior Perry Zang; juniors Jonathan Bristow, Daniel Gleyzer, Casey Patch and Brian Jin; and sophomore Spencer Daus-Haberle.

These swimmers participated both as a team and individually to help Lexington place 10th overall against 26 other teams at states. The meet was a memorable wrap-up to the season, and the boys spoke positively of their experience.

"My experience at states was extremely rewarding," said Gleyzer, who swam the 200 freestyle relay. "It felt unreal to be swimming among the top swimmers in the state, and realizing that I was one of them. But as I sat down with my teammates, whom I had grown so close to through[out] the season, I was ready to swim my best with the best. And that is exactly what I did."

Photo courtesy of Michael Aster

Swimming captain Jonathan Bristow kicks off the wall to start his race. The team ended the season with a 4-0-1 record.

Daus-Haberle, who swam the 100-meter butterfly, 100-meter breaststroke and the 200-medley relay, added, "We swam as a team and represented our commitment to each other and to Lexington. In addition to my individual events, swimming the 200 medley relay at states with Jon Bristow, Danny Mock and Casey Patch was the highlight of my season."

Mock, who swam the 200 meter IM, 100 meter breaststroke and 200 medley relay, spoke proudly of his team this season.

"This team is an extremely lively and friendly bunch. It is also one with many traditions and camaraderie," he said. "We had a fairly successful season, although it was unfortunately cut short by snow. The past four years have left me with experiences that I will always remember, and [I] am proud to have had the chance to represent LHS in the pool."

Offbeat Athlete: David Cherepov

■ Sarah Zhang
Staff Writer

Walking around LHS, an alert student may witness several brightly colored balls being juggled around in Commons II.

The juggler's name is David Cherepov. He began juggling early last June, but his inspiration came from the Chinese yo-yo.

While he was at Russian Math School camp, Cherepov borrowed a Chinese yo-yo from a friend and began practicing throughout his stay at the camp.

"In late spring 2010, I went to the MIT juggling club because I wanted to meet a diabolist there, and then, because there was an abundance of juggling stuff, I decided to try toss juggling and I got maybe about 10-16 catches. That little success got me hooked," said Cherepov, a freshman.

After his interest was piqued, he began to learn juggling from his dad.

Cherepov then managed to get 1,000 catches with three balls and moved to four balls, which was the beginning of his juggling hobby.

Juggling well takes a lot of time and effort to master.

"As everything else, once you practice, the things that become basic for you are easy, as easy as writing, typing, walking, etc.," Cherepov said. "I can do extremely easily three cascade or three ball box or mills mess, and I can do them with my eyes closed for up to a minute."

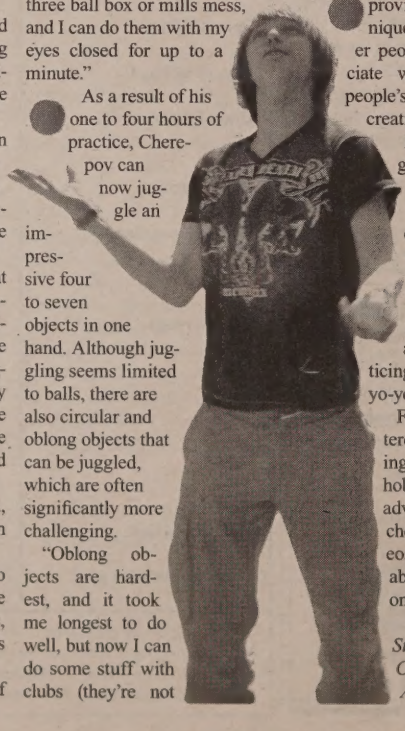
As a result of his one to four hours of practice, Cherepov can now juggle an impressive four to seven objects in one hand. Although juggling seems limited to balls, there are also circular and oblong objects that can be juggled, which are often significantly more challenging.

"Oblong objects are hardest, and it took me longest to do well, but now I can do some stuff with clubs (they're not called bowling pins, clubs) and I can do four clubs now, and would be able to easily juggle three of any oblong object that is not too heavy," he said.

Cherepov enjoys spending his time juggling, and said, "I enjoy learning new tricks, improving my technique, teaching other people and appreciate watching other people's great skill and creativity."

Besides juggling, Cherepov enjoys spending time on other activities like reading, drawing, listening and playing music, as well as practicing the Chinese yo-yo.

For people interested in learning the unique hobby, Cherepov advises them to check out videos and tutorials about juggling online.



Staff photo by Christopher Alessandrini

La vie en France

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

long periods of hard work.

The two-week vacations that come about every month and a half here are paramount to the people who enjoy them. And, from what I've seen, these two week periods of rest are not taken for granted.

My host family is currently in Chile. They are traversing the entire country and trying to "get a feel for life there." Two weeks is enough to travel like that, my host mother told me.

This is an extreme example, of course. Not everyone boards a 14-hour flight.

Rather, people invite friends over for dinners that last well into the night. Families go on day trips, cooking becomes prodigious, people attend plays and read books that they would be otherwise be far too busy to read.

For two weeks, the pace of life changes, and the French cling to this intermittent change in pace.

Yet, it seems as though the government is slowly leaning away from this rather beloved work schedule. Just this year, the retirement age was changed from 60 to 62 or 67 (depending on the type of work being done), despite the numerous and energetic strikes that took place across the country in September and October.

Will vacation length follow suit? Certainly, not if the French people have anything to do with it.

For me, too, a kind of temporary French citizen, life slows to a different pace during the spacious vacations.

In fact, the last Saturday of the winter break dawned 53 minutes ago. While I enjoy everyday life here, free time is precious; it is during free time that one really takes notice of their surroundings, when one has time to explore and to appreciate and to just be.

During the normal schedule, I go to school, do homework, go to sports practice and so on. For many of these quotidian activities, I may as well be anywhere.

It is during the roomy days of vacation, however, that I am truly in the beautiful little city of Rennes, on the Atlantic coast of France, across the ocean from Lexington, Massachusetts.